

## [Mud, Flowers and Parental Problems]

Beliefs & Customs - Folk Stuff [1?]

FOLKLORE

NEW YORK Forms to be Filled out for Each Interview Reminisces of an Informant

FORM A Circumstances of Interview

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER Wayne Walden

ADDRESS 51 Bank St, New York City

DATE Aug. 26, 1938

SUBJECT MUD, FLOWERS AND PARENTAL PROBLEMS

1. Date and time of Interview Aug, 26, 1938
2. Place of interview 1616 Hering Ave. Bronx, N. Y
3. Name and address of informant Mrs. Beatrice L. Stalter,
4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant.
5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you None.
6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc.

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The upper of a two-storied cottage neatly and tastefully furnished. In the back yard are several trees known as the Royal Paulownia, native of Japan or China, and said to be very rare in the United States This property is situated on a quiet street, of similarly comfortable dwellings, at about the city's edge and the beginning of farming district. Nearest subway station is Westchester Sq., fully a mile distant on the Pelham Bay Line.

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FORM B Personal History of Informant

STATE N. Y.

NAME OF WORKER W. Walden

ADDRESS [51?] Bank St. N. Y. city

DATE Aug 26, 1938

SUBJECT Mud, etc.

1. Ancestry American
2. Place and date of birth New York City, L900
3. Family Three; father, mother and son.
4. Places lived in, with dates 1616 Hering Ave -years.
5. Education, with dates
6. Occupations and accomplishments, with dates

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7. Special skills and interests

8. Community and religious activities

9. Description of informant Mrs. B. L. Stalter appears to be more than ordinary in educational and cultural bearing, is attractive and of an affability rarely encountered among women nowadays pestered by numerous salesmen.

10. Other Points gained in interview

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FORM C Text of Interview (Unedited)

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER Wayne Walden

ADDRESS 51 Bank St. New York City

DATE August 26, 1938

SUBJECT MUD, FLOWERS AND PARENTAL PROBLEMS

When, as a school girl, I attended P. S. 12 I doubt that any children in all New York had to contend with such muddy roads as did we. I had actually to wade in mud to and from school, mud that was often knee-deep and impossible to avoid except by plunging into mud that was even deeper. The removal of the mud from our shoes and stockings was a job that required much time and patience, and an equipment of old rags. Rags reposed in nearly every place around the school in which it were possible to hide one. There was mud out here in 'them days' and I doubt if the mud of thirty years earlier was deeper or

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dirtier. We are said to be still living out in the country, but the present sidewalks and paved roads were not here when I was a girl. We no longer are compelled to wade in mud, and that, I believe is a progress to which we may point with some pride. I don't suppose that a tale of mud is precisely what you are after. Flowers would be a prettier subject-in fact the memory I have of the many kinds of flowers that used to grow around here is certainly more pleasant than of the mud we endured.

By the way, the school I attended, P. S. 12, was the one with which Dr. Condon, the "Jafsie" spoken of during the Lindbergh case, was 2 associated. Whatever may have been said of him, I remember him as a fine man. He, I imagine, would be a good one for you to see. He is an old-timer here in the Bronx, and would remember so much of earlier times and events. He always seemed a kindly sort of man and as having a sense of humor. I am sure that he would have been amused at the dilemma I found myself in not long ago. My son, now a boy of seventeen years of age, had his heart set up on a gun. He implored us to give him a gun as a birthday present. We, being rather 'modern' and against lethal firearms as a means of developing youngsters, were opposed to giving him a gun and at last persuaded him that a bicycle were a better present-even though it cost us more. But our neighbor's case was different. Their son, a chum of our boy, wanted a bicycle. The mother, however, remembering a bad accident that once happened to someone she knew, was in fear of a bicycle but had no objection to a gun. So their boy, wanting a bicycle, got a gun. Our's wanting a gun, got a bicycle, Both boys, as things turned out, were quite pleased, for by exchanging their gifts each had, frequently enough, the present he at first desired. And we, baffled parents had no alternative but to philosophize upon the irony of things.

### \*\*\*\*\* THE RACE TRACK FIRE

On April 10, 1910, the ball game was just over at Cannon's. Who remembers Cannon's at Tremont and Castle Hill Aves., opposite St. Raymond's Church! I was a little girl, clinging

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to my father's hand, homeward bound, when we noticed smoke "over the tracks," as we referred to the old Morris Park Race Track ground.

3

My father suggested going over to see what it was, and over the N. Y. H. and Hartford tracks we went. We trudged through the fields, not making much progress because the wind was blowing a gale.

Pretty soon we heard the clang of the fire engines and turning around we beheld the most spectacular sight I have ever witnessed. Moriarity's house was a sheet of flame that seemed to reach to the very heavens. Our own houses on Poplar St., was almost directly opposite that blaze and instinctively we started for home.

When we reached there, neighbors were running in all directions with safe deposit boxes and my mother was frantically trying to account for the family. (There were eight of us children.) Some of the firemen went through the streets calling for every house-holder to play the hose on his roof. I can still see my father and brother pouring palls of water over the roof.

There was so much to watch as to exceed the Ringling Bros. Circus for diversified interest, and for the first time I had a box seat at a big show. It was a three-alarm fire. Engines came from Belmont Avenue and, that was quite a distance from our house. The only way to get the hose near the blaze was across the railroad tracks. All trains were halted and this added to the excitement.

The steeple of the old Westchester M. E. Church, on E. Tremont Avenue, caught fire. Not much damage was done to the church, but the water just about ruined its new green carpet. I often think how many quilting parties the Ladies' Aid Society must have given to buy that carpet.

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Word got around that P. S. 12 was burning. Young hearts beat high, hoping it would burn to the ground, However, it was only the school fence that burned.

4

And who remembers the cow "Daisy" who grazed for years in the lots next to the barns where the police horses were kept on Williams bridge Rd.? I have just been told that Daisy" escaped the fire, having been found wandering around a few days later by policeman.

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Would you be interested in trees outside our door? They are the royal paulownia, a native of Japan or China. For years this property was a large estate owned by a wealthy family, which accounts for those unusual trees.

In the spring when other trees are budding, the royal paulownia looks quite barren. Then before the leaves appear the tree is covered with clusters of purple flowers that might rival orchids at a distance. These last for a while before the leaves come out, and I hardly believe there is another local tree that can boast of leaves of such proportion. I measured one this morning, and it was nineteen inches across.

In the Fall, when the leaves have gone, there appear what look like great bunches of nuts. There are only a dozen trees left now. They are so old that neighbors chopped them down for firewood, saying they were ready to fall anyway.

The paulownia was named for the Russian Princess Anna Pavlovna, a daughter of Paul 1, and has showy violet-purple fox-glove-like flowers in pyramidal panicles.

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FORM D Extra Comment

STATE NEW YORK

NAME OF WORKER WAYNE WALDEN

ADDERS 51 Bank St., New York City

DATE August 26, 1938

SUBJECT MUD, FLOWERS AND PARENTAL PROBLEMS

The foregoing interview with Mrs. Stalter is substantially correct and given as literally as my notes and memory it possible. The appended two articles, typed for me by the author, the obliging Mrs. Stalter are given for whatever interest they may contain.